



Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO)

“Speak Up Iowa”

Listening Sessions of the Rebuild Iowa Office and the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission And Proposed Commission “Theme” Topics

Purpose: To provide opportunities for public and community official involvement in the initial recovery effort, with specific focus on gaining input for the RIO 45-Day Report due on September 2, 2008

Considerations:

- Tight timeframe (to hold and organize sessions, as well as produce final report)
- Need for three additional field-based Commission meetings
- Limitations of staffing
- Complexity and manageability of associated communications effort
- External factors impacting scheduling (e.g., limitations of time availability for Commission members; Iowa State Fair)

PROPOSAL

We proposed the holding of as many as six (6) event sessions, each occurring over a 1 day period (as described later in this document), supported by a website where people who are unable to attend meetings can submit their thoughts, ideas, and unmet needs online.

Locations: Cedar Rapids
Cedar Falls
Wapello
Fort Dodge
Red Oak
Iowa State Fair (Des Moines)



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Concept of Operations: In light of the tight timeline, logistical and communications concerns, and the limited availability of Commission members, we propose the scheduling of day-long series of events designed to provide opportunities for exposure to the disaster area, formal and informal discussions with local officials from impacted jurisdictions, working sessions to gather input from the public, and when scheduled, RIAC meetings in the field.

In preparation for these day-long series of events, we propose the RIO Executive Director and RIAC Chairman participate in editorial board meetings with the *Des Moines Register* and the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* prior to the commencement of the Listening Sessions. The purpose of these editorial board meetings would be to elicit the support and endorsement of the media for the RIO and RIAC outreach programs and to publicize the schedule of upcoming events.

A representative day when an “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session might be held is as follows:

8:00 a.m.:

- Two buses depart Des Moines with RIO Exec. Dir., RIO staff, and locally-based Commissioners, for meeting location

10:00 a.m.:

- Drop off RIO staff at site for the day’s meetings for set-up and prep work
- Meet invited local officials (and possibly selected media); board buses for organized tour of impact area (led by local officials), with stops at 1-2 sites where the Commissioners can view damage and meet with additional local officials, as appropriate
- At least one pre-planned media availability for Commissioners and local officials

1:00 p.m.:

- Commissioner lunch with local officials

2:30 – 5:30 p.m.:

- Commission meeting (where applicable) in a local facility

3:00 – 7:00 p.m.:



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- “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session begins

Handouts provided to attendees as they arrive providing agenda and format for the Listening Session, basic disaster recovery information, key contacts (teleregistration, DAC locations, housing help phone numbers, etc.), information about the RIO and RIAC, and information about how meeting input will be used and how to offer thoughts via the internet and other means after the session is over

Nine stations set up, each staffed by RIO support personnel, where people can provide input and discuss their issues. Stations could provide some or all of the following:

Charts and boards with key information specific to understanding known issues related to that Task Force issue area

30+ minute facilitated sessions, held 3-4 times during the event;

One-on-one discussions between RIO Staff and attendees

Chart paper posted on the wall where individuals can write notes to respond to focused questions designed to solicit their input in key issues

Post-it boards to allow attendees to post thoughts, ideas and needs

Other, as identified by RIO

5:30 p.m.:

- Bus #1 with Commissioners, RIO Exec. Dir. departs for Des Moines

6:00 p.m.:

- RIO support personnel take-down meeting materials; departs by 1900 on Bus #2

Iowa State Fair:

In addition to the Commission Meetings and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Sessions across the State, we propose utilizing space at the Governor’s Office booth at the Iowa State Fair Pavilion to provide Iowa citizens to provide input for the recovery. FORMAT UNDETERMINED AT THIS TIME

Proposed Schedule:

“Speak Up Iowa” Listening Sessions and disaster area tours are proposed for:

- July 31 in Cedar Rapids (Concurrent with a RIAC Meeting);
- August 5 in Wapello (Concurrent with a RIAC Meeting);
- August 11 in Red Oak;
- August 12 in Fort Dodge; and



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- August 19 in Cedar Rapids (Concurrent with a RIAC Meeting).

“Speak Up Iowa” Website:

We also propose that the RIO / RIAC establish an “Speak Up Iowa” website, with the primary purpose of giving citizens, businesses, and others a place to voice additional thoughts and needs outside of the Listening Session context.

This website should provide some information about the recovery effort and about the specific known data / issues related to each of the Task Force areas, and request input associated with a number of focused, pre-identified issues. The site should also provide an opportunity for “other concerns” to be expressed in a more free-form and unstructured manner.



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Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission

Task Force Activity – First 45 Days

According to the Governor's Executive Order, the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) is expected to divide into "Task Forces," each focusing on specific issue areas that are of great concern in the recovery. The Task Forces identified to date include the following: Housing; Economic and Workforce Development; Agriculture and the Environment; Infrastructure and Transportation; Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation; Education; Public Health and Healthcare; Long-Term Recovery Planning; and Records and Cultural Heritage.

Each Task Force will be chaired by a member of the RIAC, with membership drawn from volunteers from across Iowa. No person wanting to volunteer for the Task Forces will be turned away; rather, they will be brought in either as members of the Task Forces or as invitees to their meetings in order to harness their good ideas and energy.

The concept for Task Force operations during the first 45-days will, out of necessity, be focused on initiating dialogue on the major problems / issues faced by the State in the wake of the 2008 flooding and severe storms, and the development of recommendations for the Governor related to both executive and legislative priorities and strategies to address them. In order to be successful in this effort, it is recommended that the Task Forces proceed as follows:

- The Chairman of the RIAC will appoint Commissioners to Task Forces after soliciting information from them related to each Commissioner's knowledge, expertise, and interests. One will be identified as the Task Force Chair.
- The RIAC Chairman, the Executive Director from the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO), and the Task Force Chair will solicit participation from subject matter experts from across the State of Iowa who have expertise and insights that may be useful to the work of the Task Force, and build the Task Force membership. These will be in addition to those who volunteered their participation on-line or through other means.
- Task Force meetings for all nine Task Forces will be scheduled during the following timeframes:
July 28-30;



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August 2-4; and

August 6-8

The exact dates of task force meetings will be determined by the Task Force Chair, in consultation with the Rebuild Iowa Office Executive Director and the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Chairman.

- Meetings will be designed and implemented as follows:

Sessions will last from 0930-1530, with a provided box lunch.

Sessions will be facilitated to ensure that meeting objectives are met.

The morning session will involve Task Force members hearing from subject matter experts, local officials, and others who may be able to educate and inform the Task Force about disaster issues, recovery needs, and recovery priorities. The Task Force Chair, in consultation with the RIO Executive Director, shall determine who will be invited to testify before the Task Forces.

The afternoon session will involve debate among Task Force members about priorities, unmet needs, and potential recommendations that could be made to the Governor regarding executive or legislative priorities designed to address known issues and gaps in available assistance, to the extent practicable.

Before concluding for the day, Task Forces will identify their preliminary recommendations so that they may be recorded and considered as part of the preparation of the Governor's 45-day report.

Upon completion of the Task Force meeting, input will be prepared according to a format that is standardized across all Task Forces to make it easier for that input to be consolidated into a summary report. This input will be considered by the RIAC Chair, in consultation with the RIO Executive Director and staff, along with information coming from the "Speak Up Iowa" Listening Sessions and submissions / input from State agencies, for inclusion in the final 45-day report draft.



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Proposed

Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission and Task Force Meeting Schedule – First 45 Days

- July 17: Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Meeting, **Des Moines**
- July 28-30: Commission Task Force Meetings (TBD)
- July 31: Disaster Area Tour with Local Officials, Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Meeting, and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session in **Cedar Rapids**
- August 2-4: Commission Task Force Meetings (TBD)
- August 5: Disaster Area Tour with Local Officials, Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Meeting, and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session in **Wapello**
- August 7-17: Iowa State Fair Outreach
- August 6-8: Commission Task Force Meetings (TBD)
- August 11: Disaster Area Tour with Local Officials and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session in **Red Oak**
- August 12: Disaster Area Tour with Local Officials and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session in **Fort Dodge**
- August 19: Disaster Area Tour with Local Officials, Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Meeting, and “Speak Up Iowa” Listening Session in **Cedar Rapids**
- September 2: Commission Report Due to Governor



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Commission Meetings: Ideas for “Theme” Content

Each of the Commission meetings will need to address a series of issues, including status of recovery operations, problems with disaster program delivery, status of the 45-day and 120-day reports, and other recurring issues. To keep the meetings relevant over time and interesting to the media / public, a series of long-term recovery “themes” must be developed that allow Commissioners to explore specific topics in greater depth, and this will lead to the eventual proposal of new strategies to accomplish objectives.

Ideas for meeting “themes” that may be worth considering for future RIAC meetings are:

Housing

Hazard Mitigation

Economic Recovery

Agricultural Impacts and Recovery

How to Support Local Jurisdictions Who Lost Tax-Base and Capacity to Manage Their Own Recovery

Universities / Education

Mechanisms for the ID and Coordination of Fed., State, Local and Non-Govt. Resources

State and Federal Legislative Agendas

In addition, we would recommend that after the completion of the initial 45-day report, the RIAC and RIO begin receiving and visiting delegations of local officials on a regular basis to discuss their issues in depth.